



Saudi health sector transformation accelerated under Vision 2030 and pandemic

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Global Health
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By Informa Markets

Digital transformation, value-based care and medical tourism are just three shifts underway in Saudi Arabia.

In the Voice of the Healthcare Industry Market Outlook 2021, an annual survey of healthcare organisations worldwide from Omnia Health in partnership with GRS Research & Strategy, Saudi Arabia was identified by respondents as the country handling the Covid-19 pandemic better than any other worldwide.

The Kingdom secured 23 % of nominations, ahead of the UAE (14 %) and New Zealand and China (7 % apiece).

In a separate analysis by global information provider Refinitiv, the country was shown to be the best-performing of all emerging markets since the onset of the pandemic. The study of 25 countries worldwide in the MSCI Emerging Market Index ranked Saudi Arabia first through its near 27 % rise in market value since the beginning of 2020.

But it's not just the economy performing well: there is positive wellbeing seen among the Saudi population. KSA ranked first among Arab countries in the World Happiness Report, published in March 2021 by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

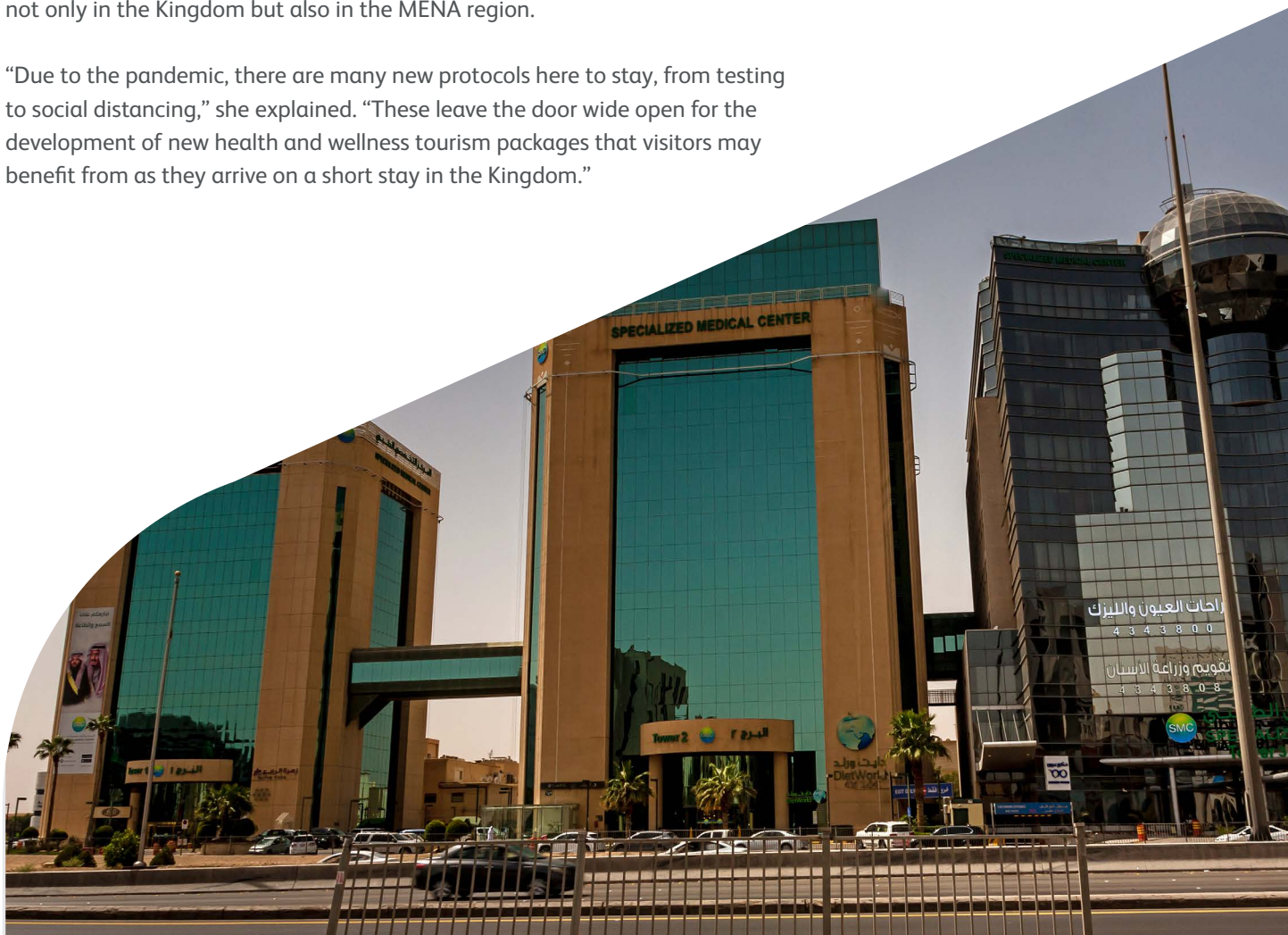
Saudi Arabia's rebound is expected to inspire renewed confidence in the country as a tourist destination among potential visitors that may include international patients.

Dr Maliha Hashmi, a prominent health leader in KSA, believes that medical tourism will emerge a necessity, rather than luxury, in spurring inbound tourism, not only in the Kingdom but also in the MENA region.

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Digital transformation accelerated in pandemic

A reason accounting for Saudi Arabia's successful pandemic response is Vision 2030, the country's ambitious long-term economic and social blueprint announced in 2016 to reduce its dependence on crude oil.

Under Saudi Vision 2030, KSA is undergoing rapid reforms to realise its economic potential - including in healthcare. Since the launch of the initiative five years ago successful outcomes have included facilitating access to emergency health services within four hours, at the rate of more than 87 % compared to 36 % before 2016.

Saudi Vision 2030 also paved the way for digital transformation, with the pandemic enabling its promotion and testing. Remote medical services have been made available through the 'Sehhaty' app, for example, while more recently users have been able to book the coronavirus vaccine of their choice.

According to Dr Maliha Hashmi, "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is becoming the new international benchmark for healthcare transformation and sustainability, having accomplished this during the course of a pandemic that has shaken the whole world, and emerging a winner in resilience, innovation and the adoption of digital technologies."

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Health Sector Transformation Program launched in 2021

With an eye on the next five years, the Health Sector Transformation Program under Vision 2030 was launched in 2021 aiming to restructure the health sector in Saudi Arabia to be a comprehensive, effective and integrated health system based on the health of the individual and society, that includes citizens, residents and visitors.

The programme depends on the principle of value-based care, which ensures transparency and financial sustainability by promoting public health and preventing disease, in addition to improving access to health services through optimal coverage, comprehensive and equitable geographical distribution and expanding the provision of e-health services.

All citizens will for instance have insurance coverage through health clusters, with each cluster responsible for providing health services. As part of a proactive health service, furthermore, all citizens will have a family doctor following up on their health condition.

Clinical Transformation Week at Global Health Exhibition 2021

From 4-19 October 2021, Global Health Exhibition will host a series of free-to-attend CME-accredited webinars. The Clinical Transformation Week will be the first in the series and will provide insights on how key clinical disciplines are reshaping healthcare to be more resilient, people-centered and to drive value across the care continuum.

To learn more please visit globalhealthsaudi.com





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